



ABUJA DATELINE

MARCH 2007

The modern Sultan: A new chapter of friendship



Sultan of Sokoto, Sa'ad Abubakar III being introduced to USAID's Polly Dunford by Ambassador John Campbell

“... But we need to educate our people more, and being a modern Sultan, without putting aside tradition, which I value and cherish very much, will ensure that issues like polio eradication, HIV/AIDS and VVF are topmost on my agenda, and we will pursue them vigorously.”

From the Sultan's remarks to Ambassador Campbell, February 2007

ALBUM 1

STICK TO THE ISSUES CAMPAIGN

The Stick to the Issues (STIC) campaign was launched in Abuja and Kano recently. USAID implementing partner PACT, is collaborating with civil society to ensure political contestants focus their campaign discourse on the real issues that matter to the Nigerian electorate. Below are pictures of the launching.



PACT's Eve Thompson, INEC Commissioner Setley Daze and U.S. Ambassador John Campbell



Drama sketch during the Abuja launch of STIC



USAID Mission Director Pat Fleuret and Professor Jadesola Akande, Director, Women, Law and Development Centre



Acting Deputy Mission Director Latanya Mapp, Kano state Secretary to INEC, Alhaji Ahmed Kabara and Lilian Ekeayanwu, Coordinator, Zero Corruption Coalition at the Kano flag off of STIC

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USAID, Cross River state sign tourism MOU



The signing...

USAID recently opened its doors to play host to Mr. Donald Duke, governor of Cross River state. The occasion was the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and the government of Cross River state. The MoU lays out the partnership parameters of the relationship between USAID's implementing partner, the Opportunities Industrialization Centers International (OICI) and its Jobs and Business Development Services Initiative (JOBS Nigeria), being implemented in Cross River state. The state government has contributed \$1 million counterpart funds to support the tourism component of this partnership.

Under this MoU, OICI/JOBS will provide technical assistance and support to the state's tourism development initiative and identify employment opportunities in the tourism sector for youth.

In his remarks, USAID Mission Director, Pat Fleuret noted that the execution of this understanding demonstrates the strong relationship between the two countries and the US Government's commitment to assisting Cross River state to achieve its developmental goals through the implementation of its tourism development objectives.

Governor of Cross River state, Mr. Donald Duke thanked the Mission for assistance provided in youth employment and tourism, noting that such support has already started yielding results. He said that the state's aim is to use its comparative advantage in

tourism to stimulate its economy and provide employment for its youth.

Presently, USAID implementing partner, OICI has four business consultants and one tourism specialist providing assistance to young adults under its Jobs and Business Development Services Initiative (JOBS Nigeria). Cross River state also has signed an MoU with USAID to improve budgetary processes and public expenditure management under USAID's REFORMS program



...And the handshake

USAID, UNILAG, 4 private companies partner to improve skills and employability

Last December, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID/Nigeria), British American Tobacco (BAT), Microsoft Nigeria, Ocean Energy Nigeria Limited (OENL), Zinox Technologies, and the University of Lagos (Unilag) launched a partnership to improve the technology skills of university students in select departments. The goal of the partnership is to improve the employability of students and address the private sector's fundamental complaint that young Nigerian university graduates lack skills essential for productive employment.

OENL and Zinox Technologies are providing Zinox computers, Microsoft and Unilag will provide software, while USAID and BAT will provide technical assistance to the Faculty of Business Administration and Department of Computer Science.

In the short term, the partners' work will improve access to computers and relevant software and integrate these software packages into the curricula. In the long term, the partners will create an institutional process by which the Unilag curricula will adjust to private sector skill demands. The value of this partnership is approximately \$1.3 million.

Nine Nigerians attend special health care congress

In furtherance of its policy of inclusion of disabled people in its programs, USAID/Nigeria sponsored nine Nigerians to the 9th International Congress on Community Services for Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs in Washington last December.



Front L-R: Omotunde Ellen Thompson; Aminu Ahmed Abubakar; Yusuf Umar Rabiu; Blessing Peter Ekong
Back: Onyih Egbogu; Amina Abdullahi Mohammed; Jiya-Doko Mohammed; Bassey Bassey Enya; Alawiyya Mohammed Umar

The congress follows developments in the provision of services to children with special health needs. Since 1992, these meetings have brought participants from all over the world together under the leadership of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—with the support of USAID—to share experiences in addressing the needs of children and youth with disabilities in their nations' development agenda.

With more than 300 participants from 62 countries, the congress' theme was 'Community Access and Resources for Everyone (CARE)'.

The initiative is a comprehensive strategy across all agencies of the U.S. Government to promote the full integration of people with disabilities (PWDs) into community life. They also addressed issues that affect PWDs such as health, inclusive education, vocational training and transition to work; transportation, employment and housing.

On return, the Nigerian delegation agreed to:

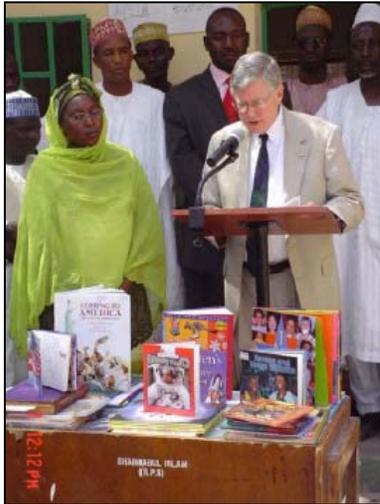
- Share the information and knowledge learned from colleagues under the umbrella of the body responsible for disability issues in Nigeria
- Conduct sensitization campaigns to families and communities on the needs of PWDs
- Liaise with the National Population Commission to ensure accurate census data of PWDs in Nigeria

During the program, participants toured educational facilities within the Washington area. The Nigerian delegation was led by Onyih Egbogu of USAID/Nigeria. Other participants were drawn from the USAID funded Kano Polio Victims Trust Association (KPVTA), COMPASS, OICI/JOBS and a representative of the government of Nigeria.

“QUOTE – UNQUOTE”
“Forget China, India and the internet: economic growth is driven by women.”

The Economist
“Women in the workforce: The importance of sex”
April 12, 2006

Ambassador Campbell promotes Islamiyyah education, donates books



Ambassador Campbell addressing the school

The Shabab Islamiyyah primary school, Nasarawa local government, Kano state received books and educational materials when Ambassador John Campbell visited students, staff and other stakeholders recently. This presentation was made during the Ambassador's visit to USAID health and education sites in northern Nigeria.

As one of 38 USAID supported schools in the local government area, Shabab Islamiyyah primary school participates in all components of USAID's basic education program. USAID's implementing partner, Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) provides teacher training, instructional materials, interactive radio instruction radios, pupil workbooks and teachers' guides.

The Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) has also been reactivated and members trained in management skills.

Shabab was established as a community Quranic school, meant to serve those children who have little or no access to basic education in the community. It grew in size and enrolment and has now been absorbed into the mainstream basic education program by the local government educational authority (LGEA). It was registered as an integrated Islamiyya school in 1991. Shabab primary school is the third

largest Islamiyya school in the area. It provides both secular and western education to its pupils. The current enrolment figure is 1033, with 490 boys and 543 girls; while the staff strength is 25 (18 men and 7 women).

In 2007, USAID/COMPASS will support 1,000 schools in 3 states, reaching over 700,000 pupils with instructional materials and equipment; provide teacher training to 21,000 teachers to improve literacy and numeracy and make 72 sub-grants to support community participation in schools.



Entrance to Shabab

Sokoto fistula center gets USAID support

The United States Agency for International Development will be providing support to the Fistula Center at the Maryam Abacha Women and Children's Hospital (MAWCH) in Sokoto, northern Nigeria over the next three years. During this period, USAID, through its implementing partner, Access Quality and Use in Reproductive Health (ACQUIRE), will train 12 fistula surgeons at MAWCH.

The hospital was established in March 1997 by the Sokoto state government to provide special care for women and children in the state and its environs. Since commissioning, about 2,500 cases of VVF have been treated or repaired.

These doctors will join the seven fistula specialists who already work at the center under the guidance of Dr. Kees Waldyjk, who has done extensive work in fistula

treatment and repair in Nigeria. The doctors are complimented by nurses skilled in pre and post operative care including counseling.

To enlighten the public, occasional mass campaigns for VVF repairs are carried out in the state. For example, Maryam Aliyu comes from Wukari, a small town in Taraba state about 800 kilometers from Sokoto. She is a forty year old mother with only one surviving child out of four childbirths. Her husband left her years ago when he discovered she had vesico vaginal fistula (VVF).

Maryam is now a patient in the pre-operative ward of the center. She is being provided with drugs and improved nutrition to strengthen her before surgery. Also, Maryam is being given psychological reassurance and exposed to income generating skills during the pre-operative period.

Maryam did not start life with obstetric fistula. It was the result of going through five days labor before a cesarean delivery at the local hospital in Wukari. She however learned about the provision of VVF services by MAWCH through the radio, and decided to embark on the eight hundred kilometer trip to good health. About 1,000 women like Maryam are billed to have corrective surgery in 2007.



L-R: Marietou Satin (USAID), Maryam Aliyu, Polly Dunford (USAID) and Matron Deborah Akubo at the center

In addition to VVF repairs, the Maryam Abacha Women and Children Hospital provides antenatal care services and routine

immunization targeting children under-5 and pregnant women.

For Maryam, she has this to say: "I am being treated well here. Insha'allah, there is hope."

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The creeks: From crime to election monitoring

Imagine representatives of militant groups paying advocacy visits to the synod of the Anglican Communion in Rivers state; or to local government officials, or the council of chiefs for that matter. Impossible?

Well, it did happen.

These events were the product of USAID's intervention to create a peaceful atmosphere among the youth in Okrika, Rivers state. The Okrika, are a sub-group of Ijaw people, who span two local government areas in the state.

For longer than anyone cares to remember, the community has been plagued by crises that has taken unacceptable tolls in life and property. Chieftaincy tussles and conflicts with the neighboring Eleme community have fostered the emergence of myriad militant groups, ready to inflict damage and destruction on the community at no notice.

However, USAID implementing partner, International Foundation for Education and Self Help (IFESH), using its Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation (CALM) initiative, recently held a series of workshops and other capacity building activities, with a view to reconciling and resolving issues of conflict, and creating avenues to address other matters of concern within the Okrika community.

Leaders from six militant groups: Ice Landers, Klansmen, Peace Makers (aka Bush Boys), Green Landers, Niger Delta Solidarity Front and Black Axe, with support from IFESH, drafted and signed a peace and unity agreement (called the Umuahia Declaration), in which they agreed to form an umbrella body – Wakrike United Peace

Guide – as a reflection of the new spirit of reconciliation. They elected leaders, and designed an action plan, which included advocacy visits to government officials and traditional leaders, peace rallies and church services. The Okrika youth repented publicly and pledged to be of good behavior.

Vice chairperson of Okrika local council, Mrs. Joyce Dennis, could not hide her skepticism when the reformed militants paid her an advocacy visit. They however managed to convince her of their sincerity, and requested for recognition by the council as well as office space.

The IFESH Conflict Abatement through Local Mitigation project has helped in creating peace in about forty communities in five states during the last two years.

As for the Wakrike United Peace Guide, they intend to be trained in voter and civic education, and acquire election monitoring skills to enable them monitor the forthcoming elections.

Protocol training for electoral tribunal judges

Two hundred and fifty judges recently attended case management protocol training for cases to be pleaded at election tribunals after the April 2007 elections. The two-day workshop commenced after the participants were sworn in as election tribunal judges. It was organized by USAID implementing partner, International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES).



Three of the election tribunal judges being sworn in

The three year average duration of an electoral law suit in Nigeria, is generally agreed to be unacceptably long. The course will give judges the skills to efficiently manage the length of time in the election challenge litigation process, with a view to provide equity to both parties, when such cases arise.

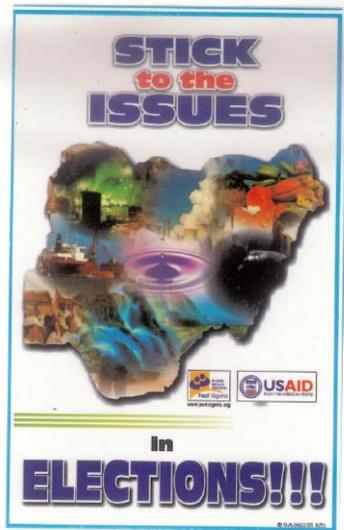
It is expected that the techniques the judges garner, will lead to shortening the cases, therefore, reducing the time taken to determine with certainty which candidate to be seated as the person who was elected. This will promptly effect the will of the voters, and contribute significantly to rule of law and orderly process of governance in Nigeria.

Nigeria's Court of Appeal president, Justice Umaru Abdullahi, who coordinated the training, also issued a case management protocol which was incorporated into the training of the judges. The protocol was created by IFES and its local partners, is expected to result in shorter, more transparent trials, which will observe uniform procedures in all electoral courts, nationwide. The protocol and training will be the first of their kind conducted in Nigeria.

Nigeria's civil society launches "Stick to the Issues" campaign

USAID's Acting Mission Director, Latanya Mapp was in Kano recently, to launch the 'Stick to the Issues Campaign' (STIC). The event was also attended by civil society organizations, political parties and contestants, INEC officials, development partners and the media.

The STIC campaign is to ensure that political contestants focus their campaign discourse on issues that matter to the Nigerian electorate. In partnership with Pact / Nigeria, civil society is promoting issue accountability among political contestants and media during the run-up to the 2007 elections.



USAID's Advocacy Awareness and Civic Empowerment (ADVANCE) program, implemented by Pact / Nigeria, has supported civil society organizations to advocate on anti-corruption, poverty alleviation, human rights and social development issues.

The decision to launch STIC in the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria is to create ample awareness on issues accountability for Nigerians.

Rice Farmers Experience Bumper Harvest

Rural dwellers in the Abakiliki area of Ebonyi State in south eastern Nigeria are traditional rice farmers and produce most of the locally processed rice that is consumed in southern Nigeria. Due to low yields of less than two and a half metric tons of paddy per hectare, the 200 mini processing plants in Abakiliki operate below capacity. Over the years, many farmers began to reallocate their energy to yam production which, they claimed, yields better returns.

One such farmer is Mrs. Joy Igwe, a woman leader in Ikwo community. In 2005, she cropped two hectares of rice but the yield was so discouraging that she decided to reduce her 2006 planting to one hectare. It was her last effort prior to abandoning rice cultivation for other crops and this coincided with the arrival of USAID/MARKETS.

During sensitization of farmers in the area by MARKETS – a USAID funded, market-driven agribusiness project - Mrs. Igwe was among those who decided to give the project a try. Being the leader of a women's group, she convinced some of her members to get involved despite their apprehensions. She was determined to succeed and applied the agronomic practices taught her by the USAID/MARKETS technicians.

At harvest, Mrs. Igwe recorded a yield of 6.2 metric tons per hectare and a sale of \$2,385, up from the previous year's yield of two tons and a sale of \$770. The \$230 increase in production costs from using improved technologies has been offset by the increase in sales of \$1,615 and is well worth her investment. She was so pleased she exclaimed: "we have never had it so good; I hope MARKETS would continue to work with us". Many other farmers who participated in the project shared the same experience as Mrs. Igwe.



Mrs. Joy Igwe beams with pride as her paddy is weighed at the farm

USAID/MARKETS strategy is to link groups of farmers to rice mills who guaranteed market for the farmers' produce. The project provides extension support through subcontracts and links farmers to sources of inputs. Periodically, the MARKETS team visits the farmers to monitor the quality of support by the subcontractors and assess the rate of technology adoption by the farmers.

Due to the success of USAID/MARKETS intervention so far, many participating farmers have decided to plant more hectares next season. Over 1,000 participated in Ebonyi in the first year of the

project. This number is expected to triple in 2007. Since higher yields translate into more money in the farmers' pockets, many farmers are now requesting to join the MARKETS network.

NEW PROJECTS



POSITIVE LIVING project (CEDPA)

Nigerian and U.S. government officials recently joined the Center for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) and leading faith-based and community organizations for a formal launch of the Positive Living project.

The four-year Positive Living project, funded by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief through the U.S. Agency for International Development, will improve the quality of life of Nigerians living with HIV/AIDS, their families and communities through expanded community-level access to quality HIV prevention, care and support services.

Nigeria has the third largest number of HIV infections in the world, with roughly four million men, women and children living with HIV according to the Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). Because of poor health infrastructure, there is an enormous need to expand care and treatment services for people living with HIV and AIDS.

To address these needs, the Positive Living project works hand-in-hand with a consortium of Nigerian faith-based organizations, community groups and networks of people living with HIV/AIDS. Key partners in the project include the Anglican Communion AIDS Control Program, National Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and the Positive Development Foundation, among others.

Project activities include expanded palliative and home-based care; HIV prevention, awareness and stigma-reduction efforts;

income-generation activities; and training and technical assistance. A key focus is to strengthen the capacity of Nigerian organizations to provide comprehensive, community-based services to people living with and affected by HIV and AIDS.

The project will work in 12 states and is currently supporting and building capacity of local groups providing HIV and AIDS services in seven states: Anambra, Bauchi, Cross River, Edo, Kano, Lagos and the Federal Capital Territory.

“QUOTE – UNQUOTE”
“No society can prosper when half of its population is not allowed to contribute to its progress. Educated and empowered women are vital to democracy – and important for the development of all countries”

First Lady Laura Bush

PARTNERS OF PARTNERS Anglican Communion HIV/AIDS Control Program (ACACP)

Part of the Church of Nigeria, the Anglican Communion has adopted an HIV/AIDS Policy and Strategic Plan that commits to expanding access to care and support for people living with HIV and their families, both within their congregation and throughout all communities where they are located. The Anglican Communion has wide reach throughout Nigeria—including 18 million members in parishes that are well spread across the 774 local government areas in Nigeria. Each of the Communion's 94 dioceses has HIV/AIDS Action Committees in place. Among the many activities to support Positive Living, Diocesan HIV/AIDS coordinators have been

appointed and are carrying out activities including awareness education for priests, their wives and other members of the Church in different communities.

The Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA)

The Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs is the umbrella body of Islamic organizations, individuals and communities in all 36 states of Nigeria. NSCIA raises members' awareness of HIV/AIDS and has spearheaded several prevention, care and support programs among its member organizations. Its AIDS program for Muslim Ummah was established to increase awareness about HIV/AIDS using teachings from the Holy Koran. The Ummah Support Group, which includes 226 Muslim men and women, is a major vehicle for expanding care and support to Muslim communities. Under Positive Living, it will sensitize, mobilize and equip Muslim communities to become involved in the care and support of persons affected by AIDS, and through Islamic principles will establish and strengthen support groups for people living with HIV and AIDS.

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FOI bill update

The FOI Bill is a private member's bill sponsored by Media Rights Agenda (MRA), an advocacy group with more than 70 members. They began advocating for legal access to information in 1999. The coalition got an initial grant from USAID/OTI to prepare and submit the Bill. This was followed with another set of grants from a USAID Grantee, the International Human Rights Group/Global Rights, to conduct advocacy in the National Assembly for the passage of the Bill. PACT, another grantee of USAID again awarded a new grant to MRA to re-introduce the Bill in 2003. This time, the Bill has been passed and is awaiting presidential endorsement.

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ALBUM 2

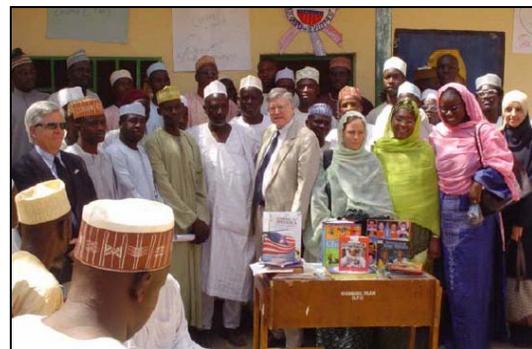
AT THE SHABAB ISLAMIYYAH SCHOOL, KANO



Alhaji Labaran Haruna, Nassarawa Education Secretary introducing staff and PTA members of Shabab Islamiyyah School



Ambassador Campbell with community women at the Shabab Islamiyyah primary school, Nasarawa, Kano



... with teachers, PTA and community members

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



The press literally had a field day on March 8, 2006, when they went on a Media Tour to PEPFAR funded, PMTCT sites at Wuse General Hospital, Abuja. Organized by the Public Affairs Section of the US Embassy, the tour was to commemorate the International Women's Day. Above is chairman of the hospital, Dr. A Warigon fielding questions from the press.



Mr and Mrs Uche, a discordant couple living with HIV/AIDS share their story

USAID/AIM LAUNCH



US Embassy Counselor for Public Affairs, Atim George's turn with the press



Winrock VP, Carol Laughin, Ambassador Campbell, Minister of state for health, Tayo Alao, G. Ukpabio of Oceanic Bank and Dr Bogunjoko, VP, Nigerian Institute of Management at the launch of the Aids Impact Mitigation project in Abuja recently.

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